

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LONDON

THE NEW LONDON AQUARIUM opened at the beginning of April beneath the old County Hall building, on the South Bank of the Thames in central London, directly opposite Parliament and Big Ben. One of its highlights is "The Pacific", a 900,000-litre tank containing sand tiger sharks, brown sharks, large stingrays.....and some large Easter Island heads! The media and public alike have already shown quite extraordinary interest in these heads, and striking photos of this tank have appeared in several national newspapers.

Richard Grubb, one of the Aquarium's architectural planners, has informed me that, from the start, they wanted to incorporate features different from simple, naturalistic rock-work, and to make the tanks a form of entertainment as well as a biological display. It was therefore decided to use architecture and sculpture that related to areas of the world where the fish could be found, while avoiding corny Atlantis-type settings. The most important of these displays is the Pacific tank which combines two of the public's great favourites--sharks and Easter Island heads. Something was needed to clad columns from the existing building structure within the tank, and it was felt that the heads had the right scale and form for the purpose: "as well as being impressive sculpturally and giving us the desired theatrical effect, they also have a naturalistic flavour."

The heads were made from GRP (glass-reinforced plastic, a type of fibre-glass) by a sculptor in Hampshire, and were hand coloured on site. They are almost 5.5 metres (17 feet) tall, and the tank holds three full heads together with a fourth 'buried' in the sea-bed at the floor of the tank.

Paul G. Bahn

THE NETHERLANDS

OUR REGIONAL EDITOR IN THE NETHERLANDS reports that in April an exceptional auction was held in Amsterdam by Christies in which the collection of the late art dealer and collector Leendert van Lier (1910-1995) was sold. Mr. van Lier ran an art gallery in which modern paintings were sold but he also sold ethnographica, more or less as a sideline, which he also collected himself. He was an excellent art dealer with a high reputation, flawless taste, and a vast knowledge of his field so that he was consulted by many collectors. In the course of his life he built up a collection of Tribal, Oceanic and Southeast Asian art of supreme quality.

It was this collection that was auctioned after his death. Two factors contributed to making this an exceptional event: the quality of the objects that were part of his own collection; and the fact that he stopped collecting around 1970, before the period of general interest in ethnographica, which led to the time of many falsifications. Thus for those buying from the collection, the authenticity of the objects is beyond doubt. The result was that the biggest collectors from all over the world converged on this auction, and that more than half of the objects went to buyers in the United States, Switzerland, Germany, and France.

The collection included three items from Rapa Nui: two *moai tangata* (wooden ancestor figures) and one ceremonial wood staff with inlaid obsidian eyes in excellent condition and



London's underwater *moai* (Photo courtesy of the London Aquarium)

nearly six feet high. The staff sold for the equivalent of US \$1,200; the *moai tangata* sold for \$12,380 and 8,250. Other items of special interest were an exceptionally beautiful Marquesan war club for \$22,700; a Sepik (New Guinea) male ancestor figure for \$61,500; a Nias crouching male ancestor figure for \$56,400; a Leti (Moluccas) crouching male ancestor figure for \$71,750, a rare Torres Straits Island drum for \$82,000 and the biggest sensation of all was an extremely rare Solomon Islands ceremonial shield with mother-of-pearl inlay that sold for \$185,000, leaving visitors to the auction breathless. Never before have such prices been paid for ethnographic treasures and most sale prices were multiples of the auctioneers' valuations. It was a privilege to see these beautiful objects together for the last time before they were separated and divided over the whole world.

Bloemendaal, April 1997

WHAT'S NEW IN POLYNESIA

PITCAIRN

PITCAIRN'S POPULATION now numbers less than forty, including six non-permanent residents. The population has been diminishing since the 200 mark was reached in the 1930s. One major drain over the years: single young people leave but few return. Goats are still being raised and some run wild in the hills. However, there are no more cows, pigs, horses, or sheep.

The Pitcairn Miscellany Vol. 39 12, 1996

GUAM

THE GUAM HUMANITIES COUNCIL is inviting storytellers, publishers, writers, cultural practitioners, oral historians, and exhibitors to its second annual "Stories of the Pacific Festival '97: A Festival of Pacific Cultures through Books, Film and Storytelling" to be held October 8-11, 1997 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Tumon Bay. Write to the Guam Humanities Council, Renaissance Plaza, Suite 2A, 272 West Route 8, Barrigada, Guam 96913; or fax (671) 734-2475. Email: ghc@kuentos.guam.net

COOK ISLANDS

RAROTONGA: A PROLONGED DROUGHT has devastated agriculture causing huge losses in crops and exports. The Water Supply Division said that the water problem on Rarotonga can be solved by adequate storage, but a 7 million gallon reservoir was abandoned, despite the fact that it functioned adequately. A second reservoir was rejected and its massive hole turned into a dump. Many public servants who lost jobs during an economic crisis last year and returned to farming are seeing their efforts—and crops—going to waste.

New Zealand Herald, February 20, 1997



The paved ramp at Tongariki's reconstructed ahu has been extended on the west end and one of its statues now sports a red scoria topknot (photo: G. Lee)

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGAROA

A STUDY OF THE OCEAN FLOOR off Easter Island, using the *Jason* robotic explorer, is one of the new projects geologists are planning in order to obtain information on the activities of the Earth's ocean floor. Scientists hope to eventually build an actual seafloor observatory for continuous monitoring of submarine volcanoes and mineral deposit formation, among other things.

Chemical and Engineering News, Vol.75(9):34-5, 1997

OF THE 500 HEALTHY LITTLE *TOROMIRO* plants that botanists in Bonn brought over to the island with great fanfare a few years ago, nearly all have expired. However, there is a project with the Universidad Austral which is equipping a botany lab on the island. They seem to be having more success.

Also on the botanical front, 500 palm shoots arrived from Tahiti. This is the first part of a shipment of coconut palms that will eventually total 2000 of these plants. They are to be planted at various sites around the island.

THE ENGLERT MUSEUM has a new staff member: an archaeologist by the name of Francisco Torre will be working with current director, Claudio Gómez.

CHILE HAS PURCHASED A SHIP to replace the ill-fated *Praga*. It will be used, as was the *Praga*, to carry supplies to Rapa Nui. The last attempt was in September of last year when the *Praga* sunk off the coast of Valparaíso with the loss of three crew

members and all cargo (*RNJ*10(4):118). The newly purchased ship was built 26 years ago in Spain, and is 72.7 meters long. Upon arrival to Valparaíso, was renamed "*Araki*", named for the family of the wife of Roberto Peña Lobos, the general manager of the company Transportes Marítimos Miramar. Her first voyage to Rapa Nui was in the first week of May, carrying about 1200 cubic meters of cargo. The *Araki*'s premiere voyage to the island will lose money for the company as she sailed without full capacity. The decision to leave anyway was due to critical shortages on the island. The cargo included 2600 cylinders of propane, groceries, and construction materials.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 9 May 1997

REPAIRS TO THE SEBASTIAN ENGLERT MUSEUM on the island are finished. Work began in 1994 with the investment of US\$156,000. Museum Director Claudio Gómez explained that the funds permitted the reconditioning of the storeroom, provided new office furniture, and the renovation of the museum roof. Also, a house for the director was constructed, an office for attending to the public was created, and repairs were made to the roofs of other offices. A structure was provided for a library specializing in island topics. Two grants from FONDART made possible the rescue and creation of a photographic archive on the history of Rapa Nui. An exposition of one of these is currently touring the country; the other is in the museum.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 24 April 1997

HETU'U RAPU, AN 18 YEAR OLD ISLANDER, won the Miss Chile contest and was set to represent Chile in the Miss Universe pageant in Miami in May. She was chosen "for her naturalness and exoticness."

However, it turned out that Miss Chile was ineligible for the Miss Universe contest as she was too young (by only 17 days). She was replaced by runner-up Claudia Delpín. Rapu stated earlier that she was confident of winning because she had the force of "*mana*."

El Mercurio de Valparaíso 3 May 1997



The newly-paved road that runs from Hangaroa to Anakena enables one to zip from one side of the island to the other in a scant 15 minutes (or less). In the wake of several bad accidents, the islanders are learning that 'speed kills'. In the photograph, the cluster of dark shapes on the near horizon is cattle turned loose from Poike to forage wherever they can. Because of the summer drought, the animals were starving. Photo: G. Lee

THE TOTORA REED BOAT, *MATA RANGI* (Eyes of Paradise) received permission from the Chilean Armada to sail on the 27th of April, but the launching of the 70 ton craft was delayed by bad weather (see *RNJ* 11(1):43). Modern navigation instruments were put on board, as well as a radio, satellite telephone, radar and GPS, life vests and a rubber boat with a motor. The Armada helped to install the masts and ropes, and helped with the fabrication of the sails. The 11-man crew included one Hawaiian, two Tahitians, two Maori, 2 Aymaras, three Rapanui, and one Spaniard—Kitin Muñoz, the leader of the project. The expedition planned to use bows and arrows and harpoons to fish.

One fear was that the reeds had rotted after ten months of sitting on the beach. It took a great effort to drag it off the beach and into the water. Two boats and a crane were required to put it into the sea on 4 May after manual labor failed to budge it.

Mata Rangi was christened by Analola Tuki who opened a bottle of champagne for the event. On May 6th, the voyage began. The boat was scheduled to go first to Pitcairn, with the ultimate stop at Tahiti. On the 8th of May, two stowaways were found: Sergio Tuki Hito and Ricardo Hito had hidden themselves in the hold of the boat. They had applied for the trip but were turned down as they had been arrested earlier for robbery and rape. These two brought the number of persons on the boat up to 13, and some noted that it was an unlucky number. The wife of one of the crew members, Ana Maria Reyes, felt that the stowaways would affect the prestige of the expedition and she also stated that the crew were offered a salary for three months but were only paid US \$578 (one month's salary).

By the 12th of May, radio contact was lost. Four days later word came that *Mata Rangi* was 140 miles northwest of Rapa Nui. They had expected to have traveled 600 miles by that time, and thus declared that they would not stop at Pitcairn but head directly for Mangareva.

On the 20th of May, newspapers in Chile erroneously reported that *Mata Rangi* had returned to Easter Island with a broken mast, a damaged prow and injured crewman. The following day it was reported that, according to a satellite telephone communication received from somewhere in French Polynesia, the boat was still on course, but with a broken mast. The Chilean training ship *Esmeralda* (which was some 220 miles north of *Mata Rangi's* position) was sent to offer help. They found her, lying somewhat submerged and with water coming in the hole where the mast had been. The crew of the *Esmeralda* noted that some of the 13 men on board the *Mata Rangi* were "prisoners of fear."

Then on May 24th the news came that *Mata Rangi* had split in two and the crew had taken to lifeboats tied to the sinking boat. They were rescued by the *Stray Dog*, a sailboat that had been visiting Rapa Nui but which left to join in the rescue effort. *Mata Rangi* was only 185 northwest of Rapa Nui; the boat had been in the water for a mere 20 days. The cost of the *Mata Rangi* expedition: nearly one million dollars.

RAPA NUI LOOKS FOR FINANCIAL AUTONOMY. Island Mayor Edmunds Paoa stated that the municipality is not able to generate its own resources through the laws of exception and



New blue and turquoise telephone booths have appeared on street corners in Hangaroa village. These are part of an upgrade by Entel to provide better communication with the continent and elsewhere. Despite this, it can still take weeks to get a fax through to the island from the Outside World. Some glitch has appeared in the system that causes it to not recognize the new area code (now 32 instead of 39). Entel is working on the problem. (Photo: Joan S. Kurze)

the dependence on the central government. The island, according to Special Law 16.441 from the year 1966, is exempt of paying taxes, IVA, licenses, and any other kind of tax. However, like any other community, it has the obligation of assuming functions in education, health and social development. "Not only me but other [former] mayors of Rapa Nui do not have the option of dancing the *sau-sau* with the current government in order to get funding," the Mayor said. He has discussed the problem numerous times with the sub-secretary of the government, Belisario Velasco, whom he called "the number one friend of the island." Edmunds has asked the government to form an ad hoc committee to study ways for local economic incentive. Other needs include paving the badly eroded coast road. The island needs a port but he noted that there are serious problems concerning the protection of the ambience of the area. Alternative choices are Hana Honu, near Hanga Roa, or Hanga Piko. The mayor stated that the municipality has no outstanding debts. His "very tight budget" was for US\$1.54 million and he will receive only US\$ 920,000. The sub-secretary said that a study was underway, and noted that there are other isolated communities, such as Tortel, that are even worse off.

El Mercurio de Santiago, May 1997

THE FIRST CRIMINAL COURT OF VALPARAISO will consider a lawsuit concerning the island's "Tapati" festival. The lawsuit concerns the ex-personnel of the regional government, headed by ex-intendente Hardy Knittel who is accused of illegal

spending of public funds. Other ex-functionaries are René Lues, ex-executive secretary of CORE (Regional Council); Jorge Negrete, ex-local manager of SERPLAC, Sergio Valenzuela, ex-chief of the Division of Analysis of Negotiations and Control of the Regional Government; and Mario Atán, ex-functionary of the Municipality of Easter Island. All are free on bail. The lawsuit was initiated when investigators detected irregularities related to the use of money from FONDART (the National Fund of Regional Development) in the amount of US \$84,300 which was destined for two projects on the island. These dealt with the payment of US \$57,600 for the construction of mobile scenery for the fiesta "Tapati Rapa Nui," and the payment of US \$26,500 for travel expenses of a folklore group to the Aconcagua Fair in Mendoza. The Valpo court can resolve the matter either by confirming the Auto-process, revoking or changing the resolutions dictated by the judge of the First Criminal Court.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 14 May 1997

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

☐ Dear Editor,

As a linguist and language teacher specialising in Pacific languages, I must disagree on one point with your reviewer of *Speak Rapanui!*, Steven Roger Fischer, in *RNJ* 10(3).

He makes light of the decision by the authors to ignore most glottal stops and all vowel lengths, implying that such matters are of interest only to professional linguists, and that ignoring them simplifies the task of language learning.

In this case, 'simplicity' most definitely has its price. It means that the learner has no way of determining which vowels are long and which are short, and where the glottal stops are, so that he or she is condemned to sounding forever like a foreigner. This is hardly compatible with what is usually considered the aim of the language teacher, which is to impart native-like competence.

It is as if a teacher of English decided to write all instances of *th* as *z*, as in: *zis is ze way*. It would certainly simplify the language for most learners, but it would be, in a word, wrong.

It's as simple as *zat*.

*Dr Paul Geraghty, Director,
Institute of Fijian Language and Culture*

☐ Dear Editor,

The report presented in the *Rapa Nui Journal* by Edwards et al. (1996) is very significant. It contains a number of facts and solutions which throw light on some disputable problems of Easter Island's prehistory. Unfortunately the authors were not aware of the Russian sources on this topic (Krendeljev 1973; 1974; 1976; Krendeljev and Kondratov 1990; Krendeljev and Kondratow 1990). The Russian geologist F. P. Krendeljev, together with his team, performed research on the island, and the collected data were a base of their theory. A.M. Kondratov, a specialist on deciphering the ancient writing systems, assisted in his studies as a linguist. *Rapa Nui Journal's* version repeats many ideas and conclusions of the Russian scholars. Interestingly, N. A. Butinov agreed with

Krendeljev's opinion, and at the same time Thor Heyerdahl did not. I should like to offer such linguistic evidence of the previous geological activity on Rapa Nui. First, in a place-name, the word *vovo* is included, and it means "split; vibration; wave" in Marquesan (Krendeljev, Kondratow 1990:14). The name of the stone figure Virovovo consists of the terms *virī* (*viriviri* "peak") and *vovo* as well. This name is mentioned in a story about a priest (a symbol of earthquake) who initiated the falling of the statues of Ahu Tongariki (Métraux 1940:87). Second, according to Y.F. Lisiansky's map and modern ones, one islet near Easter Island was lost (Krendeljev, Kondratow 1990:124), and this can be reflected in the neighboring islet's name Motu-ke-hepoko "The other islet near the islet which disappeared in the deep" (Rjabchikov 1996:258).

Sergei V. Rjabchikov, Krasnodar, Russia

References:

- Edwards, E., R. Marchetti, L. Dominichetti, and O. Gonzáles-Ferrán. 1996. When the Earth Trembled, the Statues Fell. *Rapa Nui Journal* 10(1):1-15.
- Krendeljev, F. 1973. Kto zhe povalil velikanov? *Znaniye--silā* 4:31-4.
- Krendeljev, F. 1974. Posokh boga Uvoko. *Znaniye--silā*, 7:42-3.
- Krendeljev, F. 1976. *Ostrov Paskhi (Geologiya i problemy)*. Novosibirsk: Nauka.
- Krendeljev, F. P. And A. M. Kondratov. 1990. *Bezmolvnnye strazhi tain. Zagadki ostrova Paskhi*. Novosibirsk: Nauka.
- Krendeljev, F.P. und A.M. Kondratow. 1990. *Die Geheimnisse der Osterinsel*. 2 Auflage. Moskau: Verlag MIR, Leipzig: BSB B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Métraux, A. 1940. *Ethnology of Easter Island*. Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 160. Honolulu.
- Rjabchikov, S.V. 1996. Easter Island Place-Names: Myth and Reality. *Beiträge zur Namenforschung*. Neue Folge, 31(3): 255-9.

PUBLICATIONS

- Bulletin of the International String Figure Association*, Vol.3, 1996. ISFA Press, PO Box 5134, Pasadena CA.
- Le Bulletin du Cercle d'Etudes sur l'île de Pâques et la Polynésie*. No. 14, May 1997. Délégation de la Polynésie Française à Paris, 28, boulevard Saint-Germain, 75005, Paris. The yearly subscription for this bulletin amounts to French Francs 250.00 or US \$60 for six issues and specialized papers. They can now be reached via email: hlb@ppm.u-psud.fr
- Jumeau, Michel-Alain. 1997. *Bibliographie de L'île de Pâques*. Société de Océanistes, Musée de l'Homme, Paris. Available from the author, 20 rue de Bourgogne, 21 121 Fontaine des Dijon, France. Price f 395. This long-overdue bibliography is most complete and up-to-date with 4422 entries ranging from the most serious academic publications to the *Hardy Boys on Easter Island*. The work goes beyond: it also contains a list of 239 ships, their captains, and duration of visit from 1722 through 1935; and a catalog of ethnographic holdings from some 62 museums around the world. The index enables both the serious student and the hobbist to zero in on a particular topic. Thank you, Michel-Alain Jumeau!
- Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1997; Vol.106.(1). The Polynesian Society, University of Auckland, New Zealand.
- L'écho de Rapa Nui*. 1996. No.36 (October). Clos du Parc 6; 1420 Braine L'Alleud, Belgium.
- Le Pasefika: The Pacific Island Travel and Lifestyle Magazine*. Sub-